Chapter

Recommendations



Overall Development Concept

The Resource Team identified seven separate development character areas within the county and recommends unique development strategies for each of these areas. The focus areas are described below and mapped in **Illustration 1**:

Character Area	Sub-Area	Description
CONSERVATION AREAS PROTECTED Permanently protected open space/parks.		Permanently protected open space/parks.
	TO BE PROTECTED	Additional lands that require protection through land acquisition or regulation.
AGRICULTURAL AREAS Areas of farming that should be protected from other forms		Areas of farming that should be protected from other forms of development
RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS		
SUBURBAN AREAS	VILLAGE HAMLET RESIDENTIAL	Areas where medium density residential development should occur, served with public water and sanitary sewer and allowing "age in place" accessory apartments for elderly independent living clustered around small walkable neighborhood commercial nodes.
	PLANNED COMMUNITY	Large planned residential communities following traditional neighborhood development principles.

TOWN CENTERS	MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTERS	Example is Robertstown; small-scale retail uses, restaurants, and dense neighborhoods.
CORRIDORS	CORRIDOR - SCENIC	Designated or proposed scenic roads that provide for an interesting drive for visitors -linked with a coordinated wayfinding signage and gateway landscaping.
TOURIST/RESORT shopping needs. Can be m		Developed or developing areas devoted to serving lodging, recreational, and shopping needs. Can be mixed use. Specific land use strategies recommended to concentrate development in "nodes."
	CORRIDOR BYPASS	A designated corridor that requires reservation of land for major highway improvement; specific land use strategies recommended to concentrate development in "nodes." Access management strategies needed to protect highway capacity.
		Corridors developed as commercial strips; remediation needed to correct for functional and aesthetic problems; mixed use recommended.
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AREAS		Areas set aside or developed for light industry or other employment concentrations.

The Resource Team recommends that new residential and commercial development in the county be concentrated in and around the Mixed-Use Activity Centers (which include well-designed new town centers at major highway intersections). New industries or other major employers should be directed to the existing abandoned industrial site in the county. The Town Centers should be linked by attractive highways (perhaps protected as Scenic Byways) and a countywide network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreation purposes. Outside the Town Centers, every effort should be made to encourage and maintain the existing rural and scenic character of the County. This does not mean that no development would occur outside the Town Centers, but any new development should be designed to blend with the rural landscape that makes White County a desirable place to live and a unique tourist destination.

Recommended specific development strategies for each character area are summarized in the following table:

Character Area	Development Strategy
CONSERVATION AREAS	Maintain rural character by not allowing any new development. Widen roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary and carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact. Promote these areas as passive use tourism and recreation destinations.
AGRICULTURAL AREAS	Maintain scenic rural character by strictly limiting new development and protecting farmland and open space. These areas can be protected by maintaining large lot sizes (at least 10 acres) and promoting use of conservation easements by land owners. Residential subdivisions should be severely limited, but if minor exceptions are made,

	they should be required to follow conservation subdivision design requirements. Any new development should be required to use compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and should not include "franchise' or "corporate' architecture. Widen roadways only when absolutely necessary and carefully design the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact. Promote these areas as passive use tourism and recreation destinations.
RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS	Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development as "conservation subdivisions" that incorporate significant amounts of open space. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and do not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.
SUBURBAN AREAS	Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions. Each new development should be a master-planned community with mixed-uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision. Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.
TOWN CENTERS	Each Town Center should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a local market area. Tourist facilities (hotels, visitor centers, etc.) should be concentrated in the Town Centers. Residential Development should be targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family town homes, apartments and condominiums. Design for each Town Center should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong walkable connections between different uses. Road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear. Include direct connections to the proposed countywide greenspace and trail network.
CORRIDORS	Concentrate development in nodes. Maintain a natural vegetation buffer (at least 50 feet in width) along major corridors. All new development should be setback behind this buffer, with access roads, shared driveways or interparcel road connections providing alternate access to these developments and reducing curb cuts and traffic on the main highways. Ban all new billboards to protect scenic quality.
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AREAS	Direct new industries or other major employers to any existing abandoned large sites, keeping properties from becoming unattractive, blighted, and vacant (which can cause health/ safety problems) or to well planned new sites in nodes along highway corridors or as near as possible to town centers.



Effective Development Process

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
1	The Quality Growth Resource Team recommends that the County and Cities focus on updating their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure that White County is fostering smart growth and not encouraging sprawl.	White County has initiated a Quality Growth Advisory Council to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations are consistent. Adoption of the Quality Growth Resource Team recommendations as a foundation to the updates is recommended.			
2	Corridor map for bypass. White County and Cleveland should prepare and adopt a corridor map with accompanying regulations that protect the right-of-way of the bypass until acquired by the state. This can be done by adopting the state model "corridor map" regulation as part of the city and county subdivision and land development regulations.	The concept behind the corridor map is to give the local governments a tool to withhold development approval if a property owner wants to subdivide or build in the right-of-way. That provision should be incorporated into the county's rewrite of the subdivision regulations. Since a small part of the bypass right-of-way is within the city limits, the City of Cleveland should also adopt the corridor map concept.			
3	Land use concept for bypass corridor. A land use concept needs to be prepared for properties within and near the bypass corridor and adopted as part of both the Cleveland and White County comprehensive plans. Community involvement is needed to get public	The bypass will result in important changes to the character of this part of the county, and the City of Cleveland. The county's comprehensive plan does not anticipate the likely land use change that will result after construction by 2010. Whether the corridor should commercialize or not is an important			

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	input to the land use concept. The preliminary land use concept for the corridor needs to consider land use compatibility, housing objectives, economic development policies, and natural constraints. See Illustration 2	issue that should receive the collective agreement of both Cleveland and White County, since both have land use jurisdiction over properties within and near the bypass corridor.			
4	Establish criteria for when abandonment of public roads is acceptable.	Two public roads have been abandoned by the White County Board of Commissioners - Blue Creek Road and Hardaman Road. These roads run through currently undeveloped areas, but have reportedly been abandoned per the request of property owners or developers. However, both of these roads provided some important opportunities for alternative accesses around Cleveland and Helen, respectively. In these two instances, abandonment may have foreclosed opportunities in the future for new roads. The county will need to expand the public road system as additional development occurs.			
5	Substandard subdivision access. Where substandard roads exist within residential subdivisions, require the dedication of additional right-of-way (e.g., 25-30 feet from centerline of the road) on a lot-by-lot basis, as building permits are issued.	Improvements cannot be made to substandard roads unless sufficient right-of-way exists.			
6	Inventory substandard roads. The county needs to prepare an inventory of roads that present public safety issues such as inadequate fire truck and emergency medical service vehicles.	One has to know the magnitude of the problem and the locations of such substandard roads before solutions can be implemented.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
7	Improve substandard subdivision roads. 1. Establish special assessment districts that require lot owners to contribute toward road improvements that bring substandard roads up to minimal county road standards. 2. Improve substandard subdivision roads. Provide a county public road improvement program that provides funds to match homeowner association and private lot owner funds for improving existing substandard roads.	 Funding is limited, and lot owners are the primary beneficiaries of the improvements; therefore, there should be a mechanism for all owners who would benefit from the improvement of the substandard road to help pay their share of the improvements. County participation in the funding of road improvements can help entice property owners and homeowners associations to pursue road improvements. 			
8	Prevent further subdivision of land with access to substandard roads through amendments to subdivision regulations.	There are compelling public interests associated with preventing further development that causes peril to persons and property due to an inability to serve development with fire protection and emergency medical services.			
9	Establish "clear zone" requirements for dwellings built in forested areas to prevent the loss of property from wildfires. Such requirements must be compatible with hillside development objectives which strive to limit clearing of mountain and hillside lots to what is absolutely necessary. Use available technical assistance documents from the Georgia Forestry	Dwellings built in forested areas are more susceptible to destruction from forest fires.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
	See Appendix: Firewise Program Materials				
10	Establish education programs and instructional guidelines for homeowners who build in forested areas. Use available technical assistance documents from the Georgia Forestry Commission See Appendix: Firewise Program Materials	Additional actions are needed, beyond those activities proposed to be regulated, to demonstrate to homeowners how they can protect their dwellings from forest fires.			
11	Expand the county's subdivision regulations to regulate land developments that do not require subdivision approval. Consult Department of Community Affairs' Model Code	In addition to zoning and subdivision regulations, White County needs better standards regulating development. These regulations are needed to address development that is exempt from the subdivision code and which does not require a zoning change.			
12	Prepare and adopt revised construction specifications for subdivision and land development improvements.	The land development regulations need to be supplemented with standard engineering drawings that illustrate acceptable improvements, such as street cross-sections, water supply, drainage culverts, etc.			
13	Adopt mountain protection and hillside development regulations. The Dept. of Community Affairs' Model Code provides a template.	Community concern has increased about development practices on hillsides which detract from the aesthetic character of the county. Community support is increasing dramatically for regulations. The county must act soon or risk further environmental and aesthetic degradation.			
14	Protect forested ridges overlooking Helen from insensitive development.	Development of the forested ridgelines overlooking Helen will have a major aesthetic			

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	At the time of the resource team visit, there was one ridgeline site that has been graded, leaving noticeable gap in the tree line. More of this type of development is probable, as the tourism economy of Helen continues to grow and property values continue to rise. The Department of Community Affairs' Model Code provides a template.	impact on the rest of the city if developed in an inappropriate manner. Inappropriate development practices can threaten the character and economy of the city. One possible solution is to establish hillside and ridgeline development regulations that will prevent mass grading and deforestation. White County is preparing hillside development regulations, and the City of Helen should consider adopting similar standards.			
15	A countywide zoning resolution or ordinance needs to be prepared and adopted. The Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for the zoning map.	The revised comprehensive plan should be followed immediately by preparation and adoption of a zoning ordinance that implements the future land use element and the recommendations of the Resource Team. Abutting counties (Habersham, Hall, and Lumpkin) have zoning and White County will increasingly receive undesirable spi llover growth unless proper land use regulations are adopted and enforced.			
16	Incorporate various "stand-alone" ordinances into a unified development code including zoning, subdivision regulations, hillside development, and others. Additional regulations such as screening of storage and junk yards may be adopted as part of a unified code or as separate ordinances.	Adopting the regulations as one "unified" code helps developers receive all regulations at one time. It also ensures that the various parts of the ordinance or code are consistent with one another.			
17	Revisit and revise community (countywide) health regulations to place greater restrictions on septic tank placement in floodplains.	Septic tank effluent can contaminate surface and ground waters.			

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18	Improve communication with all stakeholders to improve the public participation process. The resource team recommends making available meeting notices, agendas, etc., via the county web site or other options in addition to traditional means.	To create an atmosphere of openness, trust and fairness for all parties involved. To ensure that the public and affected parties have the opportunity to speak to county proposals. To quell rumors and misinformation.			
19	Provide incentives to the development community to incorporate smart growth concepts in their projects or to direct growth to specific corridors.	The building community will be more receptive to incorporating smart growth concepts and building in specific corridors in White County if incentives are offered as well as regulations.			
20	Make development decisions that encourage quality growth predictable, fair, and cost-effective.	This principle can be implemented by adopting a comprehensive plan that has stakeholder "buy-in"; making zoning and development regulations easy to read and simple to use; uniform and consistent enforcement of building codes and ordinances; and streamlining development process when possible.			
21	Increase cooperation and build trust between the city and county governments.	For the continued growth and prosperity of Cleveland, Helen, and White County, it is imperative that the city and county governments continue to work at finding ways to increase cooperation and build trust and communication with each other.			
22	Intergovernmental coordination - The White County Water and Sewer Authority should coordinate service extensions in a manner consistent with the county's future land use plan. Cooperative Agreement is required.	Extension of water and sewer lines has a result of stimulating growth and development. Extension into areas that are not projected in the future land use plan can undermine the integrity of the plan.			



Sense of Place

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
23	Need to create a vision for the county that builds upon the culture, heritage and mountain beauty of the area. See Illustration 6	The county is known as the "Gateway to the Mountains" and should build upon that unique position within the state. People are attracted to White County for the culture, art, heritage and the beauty of the area. These assets should be protected and promoted as a way to create a strong sense of place and strengthen the local economy.			
24	Develop a strong sense of character in various parts of the county that support the heritage and culture. Several areas lend themselves to a distinct character (i.e. agriculture areas, Cleveland, Helen, Sautee-Nacoochee, scenic viewsheds).	Distinct character areas create a strong sense of place and keep White County unique.			
25	Capitalize upon the central location of Cleveland and make it the hub of the county. Create a strong sense of place through downtown redevelopment and attractive building design within the city and surrounding residential and commercial areas. See Illustrations 7 - 14	Important because Cleveland is the county seat and is served by existing infrastructure. The majority of roads lead into and out of the city, making it a natural resource center and transportation hub. The surrounding area also contains three of the county's schools. Locals and tourists shape their opinion of the county based on their experiences in Cleveland.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
26	Build upon Helen's character and revitalize declining areas. Create more opportunities for residential development.	Helen's unique character is a tourist draw for the county. It should be preserved and enhanced to promote economic development.			
27	Build upon the Sautee-Nacoochee character and heritage of the area. Look for other opportunities to reflect the character throughout the county.	The Sautee-Nacoochee area is also a draw for tourism. It should be preserved and enhanced to promote economic development.			
28	Look for other opportunities for character throughout the county by creating attractive, unique buildings. Keep design consistent throughout a character area and ensure it supports the county's heritage.	Builds upon the sense of community by visually connecting the county. Makes the county inviting and keeps money in the local economy through local purchases and tourists.			
29	Create a strong sense of place around the local schools in the county. Promote mixed-use village style development with more compact residential and light commercial development. Promote multi-age housing opportunities for families, young adults and senior citizens. See Illustrations 15 - 19	Reduces scattered, sprawling development throughout county. Creates walkability, reduces traffic, provides recreational opportunities and reduces costs of infrastructure. Enhances the quality of life and builds strong communities. Multi age neighborhoods allow the young generation to stay in White County and lets longtime residents age in place.			
30	Create local parks and recreational facilities within the school villages. Also provide spaces that allow for community gatherings such as amphitheaters. See Illustrations 15 - 19	The county needs to provide recreational and gathering opportunities that strengthen the community and enhance quality of life.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
31	Use creative signs and public art to create gateways into various character areas and towns in the county (Cleveland, Sautee-Nacoochee, Helen, and other character areas).	Gateways are useful in establishing where character areas begin and end and help orient people as they travel around the county. They let people know that White County has a strong sense of place.			
32	Create a gateway into Cleveland where the by-pass will intersect 129 on the North and South ends. See Illustrations 20 and 21	Helps establish Cleveland as the center of the county. Is a welcoming sign for visitors and encourages them to stop and enjoy the area rather than blow through on their way to somewhere else.			
33	Support and enhance existing heritage programs in county White Co. Historical Society and Sautee-Nacoochee Community Association OR jointly form separate organization that focuses on historic, architectural and archaeological resources throughout county.	This county has a rich heritage that needs to be actively protected. An organization can provide the impetus for protection programs and adoption of countywide preservation ordinance and form basis for Certified Local Government program.			
34	Historic Preservation Commission should spearhead completion of update to the 1976 historic resources survey. Commission should begin designating local historic districts to encourage protection of the resources.	Many more resources have become eligible since original survey. Need to have a list of resources for protection and promotion.			
35	Adopt countywide preservation ordinance, and appoint historic preservation commission (HPC).	Vehicle to protect heritage of the County and provide for incentives for rehabilitation of structures.			
36	County government needs to continue its support of Cleveland's downtown improvements leading to their application for Better Hometown program, and actively support the Cleveland BHT when designated.	Property and sales tax revenue increases will result from downtown property improvements. Improvements will support downtown merchants as retail moves to edges, and help make Cleveland a destination. This will also help to preserve character of downtown and			

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	See Illustrations 7 - 14	promote appropriate infill development.			
37	Identify historic barns throughout the county and develop a program for education and protection centered on barns lead by HPC.	County has a wealth of historic barns of all sizes and types, which are important to its agricultural developmental history.			
38	Develop driving tour of historic barns lead by HPC.	Tour of barns will be tourist draw due to uniqueness, thus a revenue producer.			
39	County has many eligible properties that should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, lead by HPC.	National recognition of history of county and protection of resources.			
40	Look for ways to connect scenic byway loop and Sautee-Nacoochee Historic Districts (walkable and driveable).	Valleys are the image the county needs and wants to project: mountain scenery, traditional architecture, crafts, vistas, and local culture.			
41	Review Sautee-Nacoochee Historic District for possible expansion to include portions of GA 17, 255 and 75- HPC.	This will help protect and promote sensitive areas around the Sautee-Nacoochee Historic District.			
42	Institute education program for owners of historic properties on tax incentives for rehabilitation.	Encourages personal protection of resources in addition to public programs for protection.			
43	Identify public scenic views and provide protected areas for viewers. Publicize. See Appendix: Viewshed Protection	This will provide vehicle to draw attention to scenic beauty of county and need to protect it. Scenic beauty is large part of why people come here, to visit or stay.			
44	Develop a local heritage education program, in cooperation with the White Co. Historical Society and the Sautee-Nacoochee Community	Helps to encourage awareness and appreciation for local history and culture. Helps encourage protection of the local history and culture.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
	Association.				
45	Cooperate with Sautee-Nacoochee Community Association, White Co. Historical Society, Georgia Council for the Arts, and Georgia Humanities Council to spearhead a local arts/cultural assessment of White County.	Helps identify local, traditional arts and crafts practitioners and programming in the county. Identifies opportunities for future tourism, education, and economic development.			
46	Develop an overall guide to local history, traditional crafts, culture, and arts.	Enhances the local communities' ability to market local art, history, and culture to tourist.			
47	Develop appropriate signage programs to designate local historic resources in the county.	Interprets historic resources and culture to residents and visitors.			
48	Continue to install Georgia Historical Markers at significant historic sites in the county. Provide available space next to marker so that visitors and residents can pull off of road and read the marker.	Interprets historic resources and culture to residents and visitors.			
49	Introduce seating, planters, ground treatments and appropriate trash receptacles in front of the shops located on Cleveland's Historic Courthouse Square. See Illustration 14	To encourage and accommodate pedestrian traffic and shoppers in the Town Center.			
50	Encourage placement of more traditional merchandising in store fronts on Cleveland's Courthouse Square. See Illustration 14	Space may be utilized to market a variety of traditional retailing items.			
	See illustration 14				

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
51	Incorporate uniform awnings and consistent signage in front of shops located on the Courthouse Square. See Illustrations 11, 12 and 14	Will achieve consistency in façade design and reinforce traditional appearance of storefronts on the City of Cleveland's Historic Courthouse Square.			
52	Incorporate curbing and extend walkways approximately 2 feet out.	To increase pedestrian safety and accessibility, while creating a buffer between parking spaces and pedestrian walkways on Cleveland's Historic Courthouse Square.			
53	Identify and protect scenic vistas and viewsheds. See Appendix: Viewshed Protection	Protection of view sheds and scenic vistas offer the following benefits: higher property values, increased tourism revenue, preservation of unique charm, enhanced civic pride, and attraction of positive growth.			
54	Conduct a visual assessment and create an inventory of the scenic areas to protect, or set aside from development.	An inventory is necessary to identify and prioritize areas to be protected or set aside from development.			
55	Encourage residential developments that reflect the rural and historic character of the county, as recommended commercial developments in rural areas do.	Consistent development throughout the county or a unique area helps to promote a strong sense of community and sense of place.			
56	Establish or work with local land trusts to recruit conservation easements from landowners of properties identified for protection, such as scenic areas, farmland, and properties along streams.	Maintain rural character while directing new development to appropriate areas.			
57	Develop communication tower ordinance.	To maintain integrity of scenic view sheds along ridge tops. Ordinance specifies heights, design, quantity (i.e., encourages co-location) and location of towers.			

WHITE COUNTY

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
58	Provide nighttime activities in Cleveland such as nice restaurants and community theater.	Encourages people to spend time and money in Cleveland.			
59	Show case local artists and the counties artistic heritage through permanent, public art. Can be placed in appropriate places throughout the county.	Promotes the local artistic heritage and enhances a community's visual appeal.			
60	Designate the following routes as "Scenic Heritage Corridors" - SR 254, SR 284, SR 75, SR 384, SR 9 See Illustrations 22 - 24	Protection of view sheds and scenic vistas offer the following benefits: higher property values, increased tourism revenue, preservation of unique charm, enhanced dvic pride, and attraction of positive growth.			



Environmental Protection & Open Space

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
61	Create and adopt a Tree Protection Plan. See Appendix: Tree Protection Plan	To protect one of the natural resources that draws visitors to the area; to insure that development does not strip the mountains of trees; to ensure that the multiple environmental benefits that trees provide, from erosion reduction to wildlife habitat, remain. Promote "building with trees" methods that use and protect existing native trees found on building sites.			
62	Work in conjunction with the White County Health Department to adopt and implement a Septic Education Program. See Appendix: Septic Education Program	To reduce the vulnerability of water supplies from potential pollution from leaking septic systems; to ensure that systems are installed and maintained in the proper manner; to protect the health and welfare of residents.			
63	Work in conjunction with the Georgia Forestry Commission to implement the "Firewise" Program. See Appendix: Firewise Program Materials	As growth continues, the likelihood for greater losses of property from seasonal wildfires increases. Insuring that residents are educated and prepared is an important part of reducing property loss in the event of a fire. Promote idea of "defensible spaces" that do not have to be void of vegetation.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
64	Adopt and implement a "Farmland Protection Plan" using tools already available.	In order to preserve the agricultural heritage of White County, providing landowners with a means to benefit financially without selling parcels for development allows the rural setting of the county to be protected.			
65	Adopt and implement design guidelines for steep slope development. See Illustration 25	To protect the mountain setting, to reduce the impact of development on the landscape and to ensure that homes are constructed in a manner that does not compromise the views afforded to others in the area. Strong design guidelines will also minimize the impact of erosion and decrease the risk from wildland fire.			
66	Adopt "Part V" Criteria.	White County is one of the few areas in the state where all of the criteria are applicable. Strong protections for these resources are needed to protect water quality and ensure that the resources that attract people to this area are available for future generations to enjoy.			
67	Produce and distribute detailed maps of area trails for hiking and biking. See Illustration 26	Providing a collection of trail maps that describe the hiking conditions, length, difficulty, etc. of local trails to local residents and visitors alike will provide the county with an opportunity to increase the outdoor adventure industry. Partner with state and federal agencies to utilize available resources.			
68	Provide for at least one full time Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) inspector.	With increased development, it will be necessary for an inspector hired in a full time capacity to ensure that builders are in compliance with E & S laws to protect the streams, rivers, and other waterways from increased pollution from sediment overloading.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
69	Ensure that public access to the river is available.	Public access to the river, a public resource, is necessary so that all who wish to may launch a canoe, fish, or simply enjoy the rejuvenating effects of the waterway, not just the few who own the land adjacent to the river.			
70	Look for opportunities to provide for tree buffers along public roadways.	Providing tree buffers not only "softens" the view of highly developed areas, but also allows for numerous environmental benefits including reduced erosion, cooling, visual stimulation, and cleansing of water runoff.			
71	In order to encourage preservation of greenspace in residential developments, allow for higher density and cluster housing using innovative concepts like conservation subdivisions. See Illustrations 3 - 5	To assist in preserving the rural character of the area while addressing housing needs.			



Appropriate Economic Development

☐ See Appendix: Community Economic Development Readiness Assessment

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
72	Continue the Chamber's efforts of entrepreneurial support such as training programs, loan packages, management and technical assistance.	With limited infrastructure in the County to support industrial prospects, entrepreneurs will become the economic backbone of the community.			
73	Identify potential new entrepreneurial industries based on the needs of local industry and industry in surrounding counties, for example, pallet manufacturers, welders, milling, subcontractors, and others.	With its limited industrial mix, the County should expand its economic base to include additional entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs typically have a stronger commitment to the community.			
74	Conduct an entrepreneurial assessment utilizing the GA Department of Economic Development.	Many local entrepreneurs are hidden within the business community and are not receiving appropriate and available support resources. This is especially important since the County business license requirements began in January 2004.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
75	 Engage local residents, existing and new, who have strong technical and professional backgrounds in: Assessing current communication capabilities Effective capacity building: wideband, high-speed, fiber optics Networking to build synergy among individuals with unique skill sets 	With limited infrastructure to support existing industries, there is a greater need to evaluate the potential to build high-tech business opportunities that the County has expressed an interest in developing. Without a substantial increase in this capacity, the goal will be difficult to achieve.			
76	Consider identifying a vacant building for an incubator.	Provides a place for entrepreneurs to create an environment for their business to mature and grow. This facility will allow sharing of resources such as copiers, telecommunication equipment, administrative support, etc.			
77	Place greater emphasis on understanding and addressing the needs of existing industry. Current unmet needs include international trade support and technological improvements.	Since 1990, five of seven major manufacturing industries have closed. Expansion opportunities with existing industries will typically create more jobs than new prospects.			
78	Establish a Workforce Development Committee under the direction of the Chamber. This committee should: • Identify the workforce needs of existing industries (tourism/hospitality, manufacturing, construction, etc.)	The White County Board of Education has had great success with graduation rates, SAT scores, and optional programs for their students; however, the County doesn't proactively retain these students in the county by providing opportunities for utilization of their skills.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
	 Work with North GA Tech and other educational partners to provide the appropriate training Establish a recruitment program of 	Likewise, local industries need to have confidence that their workforce is not only available but can confidently perform those job skills.			
	North GA Tech graduates				
79	Increase the capacity of water and sewage treatment plants.	During peak season, the County is at capacity for its water and sewer, limiting future development in commercial and/or industrial sectors.			
80	Identify where the County wants commercial, industrial, and activity nodes (near schools). Install necessary trunk lines within these locations. See Illustration 1	Location decisions of smaller business entities are driven by market and where resources are immediately available. With no land use regulations and infrastructure, there is no incentive for potential companies to locate in the industrial park and/or other preferred locations.			
81	Utilize available federal and state funding resources to assist in water and sewer needs. For example, GEFA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) programs, etc.	These are opportunities that the County has not traditionally used.			
82	The White County Chamber of Commerce should assume a leadership role in evaluating the need for a marketing program targeting the Agribusiness attractions in the region. This effort should focus on the Hardman Farms project.	Agribusiness will diversify the tourism offerings in the county and attract a new market. A regional approach will keep tourists in the area for a longer period.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
83	Consider additional funding for economic development under the direction of the Chamber of Commerce. These efforts should focus on a comprehensive approach to economic development including the current activities with tourism and entrepreneurs, while adding emphasis on existing industry and developing partners that will promote the County's interests.	The County needs to invest in its future economic development. The County has not effectively marketed itself to statewide partners and has not established effective partners within the region for purposes of promoting their county for tourism and/or business development.			
84	Conduct a "leakage study" to identify types of businesses and services that are currently underprovided in White County, which could be provided in Cleveland.	The county and cities can prevent the flow of dollars (expenditures for goods and services) outside the county by identifying average expenditure thresholds and noting the types of goods and services that are purchased outside the county.			
85	Conduct a market survey on the demand for niche' stores, durable goods, full service restaurants and specialized services in Cleveland. The survey should include existing shopping patterns and perceived barriers within the consumer base.	Cleveland is not consumer- convenient. Identifying existing shopping patterns and perceived barriers would clarify which areas need to be addressed in order for Cleveland to become a shopping destination.			
86	Determine the best retail mix for the existing buildings and properties contiguous to Cleveland's historic square.	This is important for retention and recruitment. Cleveland has no discernable plan for making retail items available to consumers. This makes it difficult to determine what retail exists downtown and whether Cleveland can offer more to consumers than where they are shopping now, and just as conveniently.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
87	Organize the property owners and businesses into an association to address the future of retail in Cleveland.	Property owners can offer inducements such as leasehold improvements, reduced rent and or utilities for a period of time. Property owners will be an essential element in recruiting and retaining businesses for future growth. This is an expansion of the primary function of Cleveland Better Hometown, Inc.			
88	Review existing or have new façade recommendations completed.	The existing facades in Cleveland add to the confusion of retail offerings. The facades of each building should be appropriate in design and in accord with the adjacent buildings to create a visual, marketable image for Cleveland. This does not mean a theme. It means designs that are appropriate for the original design of Cleveland when it was founded.			
89	Form an angel network or a network of local investors to joint venture on properties to offer turnkey operations.	Cleveland wants a "nice, sit down" restaurant, yet the city has continuously rejected the sale or offering of alcohol in Cleveland. Chain or franchise restaurants are not an option in a "dry" environment. The investment required for an entrepreneur to risk such a venture without offering alcohol has been demonstrated by repeated failures in the industry. To offset that risk, local investors buy and equip a restaurant and hire a chef to run it,			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
		making a buy out available in the future.			
90	Coordinate and facilitate a low interest, fixed asset loan program among all existing banks to be administered by them collectively or individually. This does not mean a loan pool of donated funds.	The redevelopment and construction required to alter the facades moves beyond the financial capabilities of most façade grant offerings. Additionally, these funds could be used to leverage existing state loan programs.			
91	Consider a façade easement/maintenance program to create a marketable image for Cleveland.	Correcting the facades on the majority of the existing buildings to present a historic marketable image would be a considerable investment for property owners. Ownership of the facades by the city or the Downtown Development Authority would allow for prison labor to complete the work and for materials to be purchased at a discount.			
92	Allow for tables and chairs to be placed on the sidewalks for restaurants that choose to do so.	Adds an entertaining element to downtown shopping and enhances the overall experience for the shopper. Additional costs for trash removal could be covered in part by fees charged to the restaurant or creating a business improvement district(BID).			
93	Expand wastewater treatment capacity.	In order to reduce the dependence on septic systems and to increase opportunities for economic growth, increased treatment capacity is necessary.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
94	Consider activating a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for Cleveland.	Could be a conduit for state funding, revenue bonds, implementing the façade easement program, building acquisition, renting or selling. Ownership of a building by the DDA provides relief from ad valorem taxes for a period of time. The city could be a conduit for the DCA/DDRLF or the White County Development Authority could be the conduit for the DDRLF and the Georgia Cities Foundation within a city with the city's permission.			



Walkability

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsi ble Party	Notes
95	As part of the comprehensive planning process, inventory neighborhoods and commercial areas that are dangerous or uncomfortable for pedestrians.	Prioritizing these improvement needs should be the basis for public investment in pedestrian amenities. A systematic plan can also help support grant applications for sidewalks, etc.			
96	Change from "minimum required parking" to "maximum allowed" parking on all new commercial development to get new buildings closer together.	Most older zoning and subdivision ordinances mandate an oversupply of parking and create seas of asphalt that are unfriendly to pedestrians.			
97	Investigate local funding possibilities as well as federal grants for retrofitting sidewalks in priority areas.				
98	Implement (countywide) parking lot landscaping requirements that include marking or separating pedestrian circulation paths on lots holding more than 50 cars.	Cities and county should work together to create a level playing field on landscape ordinances so the cost of developing parking will not affect location decision making.			
99	Seek funding to provide shade trees and benches along existing pedestrian traffic areas and encourage private businesses to add outdoor seating and landscaping.	The more pleasant the walk, the more people will use the route.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsi ble Party	Notes
	See Illustration 14				
100	Require new subdivisions to have sidewalks or walking trails on at least one side of each collector or arterial street.	This is particularly important for safety reasons on steep curving mountain terrain.			
101	As part of future recreation planning, link destinations including parks, civic buildings and shopping areas and major employers with off road bike trails.	Properly planned trail systems can go beyond recreation to provide linkages to bike routes.			
102	Allow neighborhood commercial development in new subdivisions.	This encourages people to get out and walk and reduces car traffic.			
103	Resolve the dangerous pedestrian situation in downtown Cleveland by implementing a streetscape plan similar to the one illustrated in this report. See Illustration 7	Cleveland is a dangerous and disconcerting place for visitors due to current parking layout. This will hold back tourism and downtown retail development until resolved.			
104	Encourage more full time residents to locate in Helen and take advantage of river front views by sensitively developing upscale loft-type housing along the river corridor.	Full time residents provide a needed market for businesses during the off-season. Creating upscale two and three story lofts (while respecting buffers and incorporating pedestrian amenities and fitness trails along the river) would not only increase walkability and compact development but also broaden housing choices in the city.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsi ble Party	Notes
1	Improve pedestrian facilities in the southern "gateway" area of Helen. .05	Near the Ramada, pedestrian facilities are discontinuous and should be improved to the standards of downtown Helen.			
1	Create a pedestrian amenity plan to capitalize on the river as a quality of life amenity for new residents. Add bike and walking trails to link new infill. See Illustrations 27 and 28				



Compact Development

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
107	Create mixed-use villages with attractive clustered family housing (including multi-family housing), recreational areas and light retail (grocery stores, drug stores) around the elementary, middle and high schools. Create development that fits in with a mountain heritage.	This creates a strong sense of place by developing communities focused around a central point-of-service (i.e. schools). Reduces scattered, sprawling development throughout county. The mix of housing will allow people of all ages to live in these communities. Creates walkability, reduces traffic, provides recreational opportunities, and reduces costs of infrastructure.			
108	Promote the development of village crossroads along 384 where it intersects with 254, 115, and 255. Development should be unique and reflect rural and mountain character. See Illustration 18	Promotes a strong sense of community by limiting strip development that looks like any other place in the state. Reflects the heritage and sense of place that attract people to White County. Enhances tourism industry.			
109	Concentrate commercial/retail development along the major roads leading into and out of Cleveland (129 and 115) and in downtown Cleveland. See Illustration 29	Creates a sense of order in the county. Prevents scattered development that increases traffic, infrastructure costs and environmental damage. Allows people to easily access resources and encourages them to spend money within the county. Attractive design encourages people to stop while on their way to another location.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
110	Develop architectural guidelines for development along the 129 and 115 commercial/retail corridors. Buildings should be consistent with the look of developments in revitalized downtown Cleveland and the rest of the county. See Illustrations 6, 9 - 14 and 23	Attractive development helps to promote a strong sense of community and sense of place. Will encourage people traveling through the county to stop and shop in the Cleveland area and boost the local economy. Development that reflects the local heritage and sense of place encourages visitors to return to the county and spend money. Also provides opportunities for local residents to shop in the county. Can help to limit big box retail or encourage attractive big box design. Keeps White County from looking like every other place in the state. Attractive, unique building design at the intersections of the new by-pass and 129 (both North and South) will encourage residents and locals to come into downtown Cleveland and check out the local downtown. Keeps them from blowing through town on their way out of the county.			
111	Promote more compact, clustered commercial, light industrial and residential development within and around Cleveland. Development can become less compact as it moves farther away from the Cleveland area and the suburban ring	Important because Cleveland is the county seat and is served by existing infrastructure. The majority of roads in Cleveland lead into and out of county making it a natural resource center and transportation hub. The surrounding area also contains three of the county's schools. More compact development around resources reduces traffic and demand for infrastructure in other areas of the county.			
112	Encourage light industrial, light commercial (keep bigger stores on the 129 and 115 corridors) and residential development along the Cleveland by-pass. Protect the view by requiring a tree buffer between the road and new development. Development should be controlled	Keeps development from sprawling throughout the county. Also capitalizes on the traffic using the roadway. Limits traffic in other places throughout the county. Limit the types of development to lighter commercial so by-pass does not become overly congested. Higher intensity commercial should be kept along 129 and			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
	through access management.	115. The tree buffer protects the beauty of the county and reduces visual clutter, driver stress and traffic accidents.			
113	Encourage developers of Chimney Lake and Laceola to provide mixed-use communities.	These are large scale, planned communities that provide a ripe opportunity for mixed-use neighborhoods. Light commercial services within the community help create a sense of place and provide convenience to the residents.			
114	Look for opportunities to create neighborhoods in the rural areas through the development of cluster conservation subdivisions or similar types of development, not large lot subdivisions (one acre lots or larger).	These developments protect the rural character and the environment by reducing scattered development, which protects mountains, watershed, river corridors, etc. More compact development also allows for more efficient delivery of infrastructure.			
115	Consider putting a density bonus in PUD ordinances in return for incorporating New Urbanist elements in and around the town centers.				
116	Adopt county impact fees and lowering fees in areas that already have adequate infrastructure and are programmed for higher density, while keeping fees relatively high in proposed conservation areas.	Make sure the cost of developing large lots in Greenfield areas is not less than the cost of infilling in or near cities.			
117	Recognize quality compact development with publicity, recognition and awards.	Praising good development can expand the market for innovative developments and encourage developers to try something even better next time.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
118	As part of the comprehensive planning process, identify any impediments to compact growth in existing ordinances and educate the public and development community on density issues (e.g., fiscal/tax benefits of density, how density can be attractive if well-designed, etc.).	Public needs to understand the tax implications of sprawl and see examples of well designed cluster homes and neotraditional neighborhoods.			
119	Cities should consider becoming active partners in assembling parcels for infill development.	Development opportunity areas such as brownfields, greyfields and other underutilized parcels could be politically acceptable areas for experimenting with attractive medium density housing.			



Housing Choices

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
120	Create Housing Action Team Members should include at a minimum: Citizens Local government officials Local housing officials Public Housing Authorities Real Estate Professionals Builder/Developers Financial institutions Businesses, industry, Chamber of Commerce Community service providers Neighboring college or university	Address current housing issues and plan for future housing needs Educate the community and local Housing industry about available housing programs for first time buyers and lower income home owners. Develop an Action Plan How are you going to achieve your goals Partners Policies Programs Funding			
121	Conduct a Housing Inventory of all housing in County. The RDC should be able to assist with this survey. There are available funding sources to the RDC to assist communities in these activities.	 The 2000 Census identified Housing by age and condition in the following categories. Age of housing stock (Census) Lacking complete plumbing and kitchen facilities Other data -housing inventory What is not identified is the overall condition of the properties, i.e., which ones have structural problems, deteriorated roof, and other rehabilitation needs. This study would identify the structures and the specific needs of each. This would allow 			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
		the communities to apply for necessary funding to assist in rehabilitating these structures.			
122	Establish more "aging in place" housing.	The county's population is on average older than the state's. Stakeholders expressed the need for more such housing. There didn't appear to be sufficient units appropriate for the aged near daily retail services.			
123	Seek funding to expand infrastructure in and around Cleveland.	Some areas within the city limits are not served with sewerage. The development of vacant lots would allow housing construction near the incorporated areas and at least delay intrusion into the rural area. CDBG Housing Uses Infrastructure to develop housing Housing Rehabilitation Reconstruction Acquisition			
		 Relocation Down Payment Assistance Neighborhood Revitalization combination of housing and public facility improvements 			
124	Implement "home ownership" programs for Cleveland and White County.	In Cleveland, the percentage of total units designated "rental" appears high. The percentage has risen over 20 points between			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
		1980 and 2000.			
125	Encourage the development of more affordable rental units or starter homes and educate potential home buyers.	Comments from stakeholders indicated that young married couples have difficulty in finding affordable housing. Develop potential buyers through: Homebuyer education classes Credit counseling Mortgage program education			
126	Identify and target assistance to rural neighborhoods that contain substandard housing conditions.	The Kinseytown and Bean Creek unincorporated areas are two examples where community development activities are needed (e.g., community development block grant funding for various improvements).			
127	Permit and encourage development of senior-friendly communities.	The zoning ordinance should provide for senior communities that provide a range of life-cycle housing and health care services. The county should also promote senior living as an economic development strategy.			
128	Ensure a wide range of housing opportunities is available through the countywide zoning ordinance.	White County currently lacks any significant rental opportunities other than manufactured homes. This includes the housing stock in Cleveland and Helen. Some provision must be made in the city and county zoning ordinances for multi-family development.			
129	Identify opportunities and other options for housing around the Helen area.	Many of the area's workers commute long distances to Helen. Providing a range of housing choices gives workers the opportunity to locate near their workplace.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
		People living near where they work spend money in the county.			
130	Seek funding from Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP). • Housing Rehabilitation • New Construction • Reconstruction	Aging housing stock should not be allowed to deteriorate further. DCA and USDA/Rural Development have programs to assist with rehabilitation of owner occupied properties.			
	Down Payment Assistance Typically these are city/county-wide programs.				



	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
131	Ensure that county road expenditures are targeted to areas where development is desired. These should correspond to designated "activity center" and other desired growth areas.	There are numerous private dirt roads in areas where development is not desired. These areas should not be eligible for county road funding.			
132	Pursue GADOT's modified roundabout alternative for Cleveland Square. See Illustration 7	The current intersection of 129 and 115 is confusing and unattractive. A roundabout presents an opportunity to create a defined center of town while improving traffic flow.			GADOT has studied the issue.
133	White County should develop an ordinance defining access points and desired land uses along the Cleveland bypass. See Illustration 2	Without this ordinance, the Bypass may spur undesired strip commercial development with many driveways/access points. In turn, this type of development may undermine efforts to revitalize downtown Cleveland. An access management plan will help to ensure that capacity is maintained.			This should be developed in conjunction with GADOT.

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
134	Work with GADOT to landscape and buffer the bypass with native species.	This provides environmental as well as visual benefits.			
	See Illustration 21				
135	Identify appropriate truck routes and create signage to direct truck traffic off of certain streets.	Truck traffic through the city of Cleveland and on roadways presents potential safety issues.			
136	Create a bike network on lesser traveled roadways that links destinations together.	There are several roadways that are identified as bike routes with "Share the Road" signs, but they appear to be isolated examples. A comprehensive evaluation of routes and destinations should be completed to build a more complete bike network.			
137	Once bike network is created, develop a thematic "bike the sites" map that identifies historic sites, restaurants, parks, and other features. See Illustration 26	Supports eco-tourism and provides residents with bike routes.			
138	Create buffers along State Highway 384 to ensure that natural setting is protected.	As travelers head north from Atlanta/Gainesville, many are avoiding Cleveland by using 384. The corridor is currently lightly residential and wooded and as development pressures mount, a wooded buffer will help maintain the character.			
139	Classify all major transportation corridors in the county as "existing Scenic Byways" (Alt 75 and 348), "Heritage Corridors" (areas that should be preserved and have context sensitive development, e.g. 17, N255, 254, 284, and 384), and "Revitalization Corridors (areas that have commercial	Corridors are a major defining feature in White County and development along them should be appropriate to their context. This is important for traffic flow, land use, and community appearance and vitality.			

	Recommendation	Why Necessary	Status	Responsible Party	Notes
	strip development and should be targeted for better designed mixed use opportunities, e.g. S129, E115).				
	See Illustration 22				
140	Access management concept for bypass. In conjunction with the corridor land use concept, the Resource Team has prepared an access management concept and recommends its adoption by White County and the City of Cleveland. One alternative to the eventual erosion of through-traffic carrying capacity of the new road is to adopt a "frontage road" or other alternative access proposals such as inter-parcel driveway access points.	Unless specific access management approaches are instituted along the bypass by the local government, new development will seek and obtain curb cuts onto the new bypass road. As more and more access points are added, the capacity of the new bypass becomes reduced. The function of the bypass is primarily to carry through-traffic, not to provide access to individual properties. The community must protect the public investment in the new roadway by regulating new curb cuts and driveway access points.			
141	Manage peak seasonal traffic congestion between Cleveland and Helen. Study the feasibility of creating a tourist train or shuttle system for tourists who are visiting Helen but not staying overnight.	A railroad ran from Cleveland to Robertstown to carry logs from timbering operations in the National Forest. The county plan at one time considered recreating the train as a tourist draw such as the Smoky Mountain RR in NC. Alternatively, a regular shuttle could reduce peak traffic congestion.			
142	Assuming Cleveland's traffic congestion is relieved by the planned bypass, the existing confusing traffic circle should be addressed along with the bypass.	Future growth of retail in Cleveland is adversely affected by the existing confusing traffic circle.			
143	Encourage inter-parcel access and shared driveways to minimize curb cuts and improve traffic flow.	Where feasible, commercial and institutional facilities should share parking lots and driveways to improve traffic flow and minimize impervious surface coverage.			